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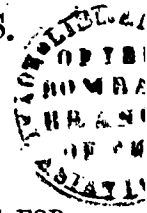
# CYPRUS AND SOKOTRA:

*"The New Colony," and "The New Field for Missionary Enterprise;"*

THEIR PHYSICAL, COMMERCIAL, ECONOMIC, HISTORICAL, AND SOCIAL ASPECTS.



**WITH A SUPPLEMENT**

SPECIALLY TREATING OF CYPRUS AS AN OPENING FOR COLONISTS AND MERCHANTS, AND EMBODYING INFORMATION RECEIVED UP TO THE LATEST DATE.

WITH SUMMARY OF TELEGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE OF EVENTS IN THE ISLAND SINCE ITS CESSION TO GREAT BRITAIN.

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BY

PHIL. ROBINSON.

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*WITH TWO MAPS.*

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LONDON:

WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, 13 CHARING CROSS.

1878.

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## NOTE.

THE sources from which this pamphlet has been compiled are the *English Cyclopædia* (the excellent article in which forms the substratum of the pamphlet), the Encyclopædias *Britannica* and *Perthensis*, the *Edinburgh* and *Oxford* Encyclopædias, Dr. Clarke's *Travels*, Dr. Unger's *Die Insel Cypern*, Sharpe's *History of Egypt*, and the official reports of Consuls Lang and Riddell. The brochure has, of course, no literary pretensions; it has merely been compiled in the hope of meeting the urgent demand of the hour for information about Cyprus.

P. R.

# CYPRUS.

"Alexander gave it as his opinion that the command of the Mediterranean sea went with the island of Cyprus. When he held Asia Minor he called Cyprus 'the key to Egypt,' and with still greater reason did Ptolemy, looking from Egypt, think that island the key to Phœnicia. Accordingly he added Cyprus to his dominions." (*Arrian, lib. II. Diod. Sic., lib. XIX.*)

CYPRUS, called by the Turks Kibris, an island in the Mediterranean, lying near the coasts of Syria and Asia Minor. The principal part of the island, in shape an irregular parallelogram, is about 110 miles long from east to west, between Cape della Grega (the ancient Pedalium) and St. Pifano, or Hagios Epiphanios (the ancient Cape Akamas). The breadth of this part of the island varies from 30 to 50 miles, its most southern point being Cape delle Gatte (the ancient Curias), and its most northern point Cape Kormachiti (the ancient Crommyon), which is 45 miles distant from Cape Anemur, in Cilicia. The rest of the island forms a horn-like projection, extending for about 20 miles in length with a breadth of from 2 to 5 miles, terminating in Cape Andrea (the ancient Dinaretum), off which lie two small islets called Kleides, or "the Keys of Cyprus." This part of the island, which is rugged, mountainous, and rocky takes a north-eastern direction, and lies nearly in a line with Cape Khanzir, the most southern point of the Amanus Mountains on the coast of Syria. The distance from Cape Andrea to Cape Khanzir is about 75 miles; but the nearest part of the Syrian coast, in the neighbourhood of Latakieh, is only about 60 miles distant from Cape Andrea. The island is about 230

miles north from the Damietta mouth of the Nile. A range of mountains runs through the island in the direction of its length, keeping closer to the north than to the south coast. These mountains, called Olympus by the ancients, now Stavro-Vuno and Santa-Croce, are according to some more than 10,000 feet above the sea. On Mount Santa-Croce, 18 miles north of Larnaka, is a church said to have been founded by Helena, the mother of Constantine; another summit, 5 miles from Zerini, or Ghirneh, near the north coast, has a monastery and an old castle upon it, from which there is a splendid view. The northern slope of these mountains is bold and rugged: the southern side is still more so, presenting a deeply-serrated outline with thickly-wooded steeps, diversified by precipitous masses of limestone and deep picturesque valleys, in which grow the narcissus, the anemone, and the ranunculus. The most extensive plain, called Messarea, is in the south-east part of the island, and is watered by the river Pediæus, which is however nearly dry in summer, like all the other rivers of the island. Another level tract, watered by the Tretus, lay to the south of the former, near the ancient city of Citium.

Cyprus, according to Eratosthenes, was first discovered about 1045 years before the Christian era. It was then so full of trees that it could not be tilled, but the Phœnicians in smelting copper thinned the forests immensely. Josephus says that the descendants of Cittim, son of Javan, son of Japhet, were the original colonists of Cyprus. According to his account, Cittim, seeing his brother Tarshish settled in Cilicia, where he built Tarsus, settled on the opposite island and founded Chittim.

Strabo (Casaub., 682, etc.) gives the following enumeration of the towns of Cyprus in his time. On the north coast, east of Cape Acamas, were Arsinoë, Soli, with a harbour founded by Phalerus and Acamas of Athens; Limenia, inland; then east of Cape Crommyon, Lapathus, built by the Lacedemonians; next Agidus, Aphrodisium, and Carpasia; east of the last was a mountain and cape called Olympus, with a temple of Venus

upon it, which women were forbidden to enter. Turning thence towards the south was Salamis, at the mouth of the Pediæus, one of the principal cities of the island, said to have been built by Teucer, an emigrant from the island of Salamis. Near the mouth of the Pediæus was Ammochostos, the name of which remains in the corrupt form of Famagosta. Proceeding southward was another Arsinoë, with a port; next came Leucolla, near Cape Pedalium, a lofty table-land called the "Table of Venus." West of Pedalium was Citium, with a harbour that could be closed. Citium was a large town and the birthplace of Zeno, the Stoic. West of Citium was Amathus. Inland was Palæa, and another mountain called Olympus. Sailing round Cape Curias to the west was the town of Curium with a port, built by the Argivi. Here the coast turns to the north-west, looking towards Rhodes, and had the towns of Treta, Boosoura, and Old Paphos (Palæpaphos); then Cape Zephyrium; and next to it another Arsinoë, with a port, temple, and sacred grove; and New Paphos, built by Agapenor, 60 stadia by land from Old Paphos. The north-eastern part of the island was called the Akte of the Greeks, from the tradition that Teucer landed here with his colonists.

Most of the above towns, and others which Strabo has left out, have long since disappeared. The present towns of Cyprus are the following:—*Lefkosia*, vulgarly called *Nikosia*, the capital of the island and the residence of the Turkish governor, which is near the site of the ancient Letra or Leucotra. Its population is not more than 16,000. The town stands in the centre of the island, in a plain surrounded by mountains. Lefkosia was the residence of the kings of Cyprus of the Lusignan dynasty, and was then much larger than at present; but the Venetians destroyed part of it in order to strengthen the remainder. It is now three miles in circumference. The church of St. Sophia, a fine Gothic building, is converted into a mosque; and the monuments of the Lusignans in it are sadly mutilated. There are also a fine bazaar, a khan for travellers, several Greek churches and convents, a Roman Catholic church, and the

palace of the governor, on the portal of which is still seen the Venetian lion in stone. The bastioned walls erected by the Venetians still stand. The streets are narrow and dirty, and many of the fine old mansions are crumbling to decay. Carpets, cotton prints, and morocco leather are the chief industrial products; there is some trade in raw cotton and wine. The Greek archbishop of Lefkosia is metropolitan of the whole island. *Famagosta*, on the east coast, a few miles south of old Salamis, not far from the site of the ancient Tamassus, formerly famous for copper mines, is a town once strongly fortified by the Venetians, but now much depopulated and decayed. The Venetian palace and most of the churches are in ruins, and the fortifications are now insignificant. *Larnaka*, or Larnika, near the site of old Citium, near the south coast and 24 miles south from Lefkosia, is a thriving place, being the residence of the European consuls and factors, and the seat of the chief trade. The port of Larnaka is at Salines, about a mile and a half from it. A Greek bishop resides at Larnaka, and there are also some Catholic churches in the town. The houses are built chiefly of clay, and only one story high above the ground floor, on account of the earthquakes to which the island is subject. The interior of the houses, however, is comfortable, the apartments are paved with white marble, and almost every house has a garden, of which the Cypriotes are very fond. The principal exports consist of cotton, wine—the best of which is produced near Limasol—salt, corn, opium, turpentine, silk, and fruit; population about 3000.

*Limisso or Limasol.*—Near the ancient Amathus, 42 miles south-west from Larnaka, has a good harbour, but the town is a heap of ruins; in the country hereabouts the vine and other fruit-trees flourish; carob-trees are especially abundant. *Baffo*, or *New Paphos*, is famous in ancient poetry as the favourite residence of Venus (Homer, 'Odyssey,' v.), and at a somewhat later period as the site of one of the chief temples of the goddess. Under the Romans, New Paphos was the principal town of the western division of the island. It was destroyed by an earthquake in

the reign of Augustus, but soon afterwards rebuilt. St. Paul came to Paphos, and there converted the Roman deputy-governor Sergius Paulus. The only relic of the Venetian period is the church of St. George, and of its subsequent importance few vestiges now remain.

On the north coast is *Zerini*, or *Ghirneh*, the ancient Cerinia, with a fort and a small harbour, from which there is some traffic with the opposite coast of Caramania. Besides these, there are a few Greek villages and several monasteries scattered about the island, notably those of Chrysostomo, Bella pais, Acheropithi, H. Mama, and Kikkos, carefully described by Drs. Unger and Kotschy in *Die Insel Cypern*. Of the forts and castles of Buffavento, Hilarion, Cantara—of other old buildings, the chapel of Phancromene, the old Kition, the temples at Salamis, Dali, Hierokipos, Paphos, Palæpaphos, Amathus, Lapethus, Keryneia, and Lamnias, detailed and scientific description will be found in the same work.

The soil of Cyprus is naturally fertile; formerly under the Venetians it maintained a population of nearly 1,000,000; but the number of inhabitants in 1850 was only 140,000, about 100,000 of whom are Greeks and 30,000 Turks, and the remainder Christians and Maronites. From neglect and defective administration the inhabitants are in poor circumstances. Many districts of the island being uninhabited, are of course uncultivated wastes, or clothed with heath, thyme, and other aromatic plants. Cotton of the finest quality, excellent wine, and all kinds of fruit are produced; but agriculture is in a most backward state. The average annual yield of corn is about 112,000 quarters. Besides the productions just named, madder, opium, colocynth, oranges, lemons, pomegrantes, hemp, tobacco, &c., are grown. The carob-tree (*Ceratonia Siliqua*) abounds in some districts; its succulent pods are exported to Egypt and Syria, while the pulp, which is called St. John's Bread, and resembles manna, is used as an article of food. Other products are, olive-oil, pitch, wool, cheese, rasins, and silk. The Venetians formed plantations of sugar-cane, but these have now been abandoned.

On the mountains are forests of fine timber. One of the most important plants of the island in respect to its economical uses is the Ferula Græca; of the stalks the Cypriote forms a great part of his household furniture; and the pith is used instead of tinder for conveying fire from one place to another, as taught by Prometheus of old. Sheep and cattle thrive.

In their chapter on the flora, the learned authors quoted on p. 9 give an account of the vegetation of the island. We read that, "in Cyprus prairie or meadow land does not exist; the 'Ackerland' takes the place of it. After the rains, but only for a short time, cereals give a satin-like green to the landscape; and among them grow profusions of flowers; but these artificial rather than natural fields fade more quickly than the flowers, and scarcely last a few weeks beyond the last spring rain. There is only one small corner of the island where the vegetation resembles ours. The great heat of the summer destroys all the tender plants; only those plants survive which through their anatomical construction, or hard substance, or in consequence of growing near water, can resist the effects of the heat.

There is great resemblance in the vegetation throughout Cyprus to the other islands of the Mediterranean. In February and March there is on all the river edges profusion of lilies; in April and May on the land side is one carpet of flowers. During the heat, however, the land assumes a yellow tint: pine forests abound, olives, myrtles, and laurel trees. As far as the island has as yet been explored we know there are 1000 different sorts of plants. No eastern island can show such a rich forest growth as Cyprus.

The *Pinus maritima* in Cyprus covers the hills and mountain regions to the height of 4000 feet as one of the commonest trees. The *Pinus laricio*, which covers all the heights to 4000 feet above the sea, rises on the western mountains of the island to 6000 feet, and gives it a dark appearance from the sea. The wild cypress (*Cupressus horizontalis*) is the third tree which grows commonly in the eastern part of the island and in some

places forms by itself whole woods. On the whole of the northern chain of mountains this wild cypress grows often at the height of from 2000 to 3000 feet above the sea. Great forests of wild cypresses must also have covered the whole of the south of the island, as also must a shrub, the *Juniperus Phœnicea*. In the north, several varieties of oak are found, and throughout the island the arbutus abounds; the carob-tree and olive flourish on the banks of all the rivers and up to an elevation of 1000 feet above the sea." (See pages 101–423 of the work in question for a complete synopsis and enumeration of the flora of the island, together with their commercial and medicinal uses.)

The next chapter, on the "Condition of the Agriculture," is divided into timber-trees, wine-producing plants, and garden trees, under which last will be found full accounts of the olive, carob, and all other fruit-trees met with in the island.

In ancient times Cyprus was famous for its valuable copper mines, as well as for gold, silver, and precious stones, including the diamond, emerald, jasper, opal, and agate. Copper, asbestos, talc, rock-crystal, and various other minerals are known to exist, but no mines are worked. Salt is made on the seashore to the extent of about 10,000 tons annually.

"On the side of a mountain near Paphos, there is a cavern producing the most beautiful crystal, which, on account of its brilliancy, is called the Paphian diamond. People are forbidden to carry away the smallest piece of it, and guards are placed round the mountain. . . . The hills nearest to Larnaka consist wholly of talc, which serves for the composition of the plaster used in all the houses."

Game and fish are plentiful. The island is infested with snakes, tarantulas, and venomous spiders; and sometimes almost every green herb and leaf is devoured by clouds of locusts from the neighbouring continent.

A catalogue of the Fauna of the island will be found in Dr. Unger's book. A whole chapter is there devoted to the insect pests of Cyprus, notable among which is the locust; the following

is a complete list of the destructive Orthoptera collected by Mr. Brunner von Wattemough in Cyprus:—

Decticus albifrons.
Acridium tartaricum.
Stannonotus cruciatus.
Locusta viridissima.
Poethetis Rawliniana.
Gryllus capensis.
Periplancta orientalis.
Heterogamia ægyptiaca.
Forficula auricularia.
Gryllocalpa vulgaris.
Grylus burdegalensis.
Adontura, and the
Tryxalis unguiculata.

"The commonest wild animals are the fox and hare, the latter feeds on odoriferous herbs, and tastes therefore most agreeably. Of water-fowl there is a great abundance. The beccaficos and ortolans are very common and remarkably fat."

Dr. Clarke gives a gloomy account of its insect terrors. After saying, "Among the animals of Cyprus those termed domestic have degenerated like their masters and have also greatly decreased in number, he states that snakes and other hurtful and hideous reptiles have been allowed to propagate and to cover the fields. Tarantulæ, with a black and hairy body and yellow and brilliant eyes, are here not uncommon, and a large spider is sometimes met with, called by Sonnini the galcode of the Levant. According to this author it is about an inch in length, 'has a body of livid yellow, and beset with long hairs and even with prickly ones in some places. It runs with prodigious swiftness and thus more easily escapes its destruction, in which mankind are interested; its bite being very dangerous and its venom very subtle. The parts which are attacked by it swell in an instant and occasion excessive pain, followed by certain death if proper remedies be not speedily applied.'"

The climate is cold in winter, owing to the winds that blow from the mountains of Asia Minor and Syria. In the plains the heat of summer is excessive, but it is moderated by the sea breezes; rain is very rare in summer, and as irrigation is neglected, of course there is then very little verdure. Some

districts are unhealthy, from want of drainage and the consequent malaria.

The chain of mountains which intersect Cyprus produces also a very material difference of temperature in the two divisions of the island. In the northern region the heats of summer are tempered by the refreshing winds which blow from the high mountains of Caramania. These produce piercing colds during winter, and even preserve the snow on some of the highest spots during the greater part of the year. But on the south the north winds are impeded by the mountain barrier, and the heats are increased by the reflection from the shelving rocks which form the declivities of the hills, and from a soil so white that the glare is often sufficient to cause temporary blindness. The southern coast is also liable to hot winds from almost every point of the compass. These come from the parched deserts of Curdistan on the north-east, from the sands of Palmyra on the east, from the great desert of Arabia on the south-east, and on the south and south-west from Egypt and Lybia.

During a squall from the north-east Dr. Clarke endeavoured to ascertain the temperature. "We found it so scorching," says he, "that the skin instantly peeled from our lips, a tendency to sneeze was excited, accompanied by great pain in the eyes, and chopping of the hands and face, and the mercury exposed to its full current rose 6° of Fahrenheit in two minutes, from 80 to 86." The heats are sometimes so excessive that persons going out without an umbrella are liable to suffer from a coup-de-soleil, or sunstroke, a malady by no means uncommon in this island, and the inhabitants, in order to guard against it, wrap up their heads in a large turban, over which, in their journeys, they place a thick shawl many times folded. They seldom, however, venture out of their houses during midday, and all journeys, even those of caravans, are performed in the night. Rains are also very rare in the summer season, and long droughts banish vegetation.

In their work above referred to, Drs. F. Unger and Th. Kotschy, after giving a geological sketch of the island, its mountains and

strata, and an account of its streams, go on to describe its climate and meteorological aspects. Under this head we read that it is so "hot in summer as to make occupation irksome, and so cold in winter that the absence of spring and autumn makes the transition from one extreme to the other very sudden. The climate is, of course, cooler in the more mountainous portion of the west than in the flat eastern side. While the temperature of the air in the height of summer mounts to 90° in the shade it seldom falls in winter in the flatter portion of the land to freezing point. The winter, therefore, has a flora, which, however, reaches its end in March, and may be rather considered as spring flora. The months October, November, December, is the time of the downfall of the rains, which entirely cease during the summer, when there is always a blue sky spread over the island. But the dryer the summer the damper the winter, and sometimes it rains for 40 days together. At such periods the thirsty land recovers itself. On the other hand, there are winters when no rain falls, and drought, &c., is severely felt in summer. We read that once in the time of Constantine, no rain fell in the island for 36 years. Even if we can bear the heat of March and April, towards the middle of May the scene changes, the harvest is over, and wherever the eye rests all is dried up and parched.

"The temperature has now reached 80°, and sometimes in the middle of the day is even higher; the atmosphere is thick, and a veil seems to fall over all surrounding objects. All rivers are dry, the earth covered with dust, and the wind roaring makes the air more oppressive; finally come a hoard of annoying insects from which you may seek in vain to escape. (All dew ceases in June and July). On old coins a lion was represented, which is supposed to mean the destroying sun. . . . It is very unhealthy in summer in many of the seaports; people avoid the sea round Larnaka and the mouth of the Pediæus in July and August. A thick fog spreads over the plains and envelopes the mountains, which is very unhealthy. All work is done in the evening and at night. Sometimes there is a breeze from

the sea, but we never heard of the overpowering heat growing less terrible after 9 in the morning. No very correct calculations have yet been made about the heat, and the best authenticated returns are those which A. Gaudrey has given in his works. They are based on what Dr. Foblaut observed at Larnaka from the middle of May to the middle of September in 1853. He gave an account of the temperature from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. These observations are not calculated to give us a cheering idea of the temperature."

Cyprus appears to have been colonised by the Phœnicians at an early period, and the island, or a portion of it, seems to have been subject to them even down to the time of Solomon. Their chief town, Citium, is supposed to have been the "Chittim" mentioned in the Bible. Its ruins lie between Larnaka and its port of Salines. Phœnician inscriptions have been found in the foundations of a fort, which defended a large basin or harbour, now nearly filled up.

Lieutenant Leycester ('London Geographical Journal,' vol. xxii.) found in Cyprus inscriptions of the earliest times—Cuneiform and Phœnician. Ethiopians are also mentioned as forming part of the population, but it is difficult to say exactly who are meant. Greek colonies afterwards settled on the coast. According to Strabo it was divided into several petty kingdoms, who were sometimes at war with, and sometimes allied to, the neighbouring powers of Greece and Asia Minor. Amasis, king of Egypt, invaded Cyprus and took Citium (Herod. ii. 162), and it was probably he who introduced the Ethiopian or African settlers. The island became subject to the Persians, and afterwards submitted to Alexander the Great, upon whose death it fell with Egypt to the share of Ptolemy Soter, "The son of Lagus." Having crushed Cyrene, which had revolted, "Ptolemy (B.C. 313) crossed over to Cyprus to punish the kings of the little states on that island for having joined Antigonus. For now that the fate of empires was to be settled by naval battles the friendship of Cyprus became very important to the neighbouring states. The island of Cyprus is 150 miles long and

75 broad, or not much less than Lower Egypt. It has always been rich in corn and wine, and not less so in its mines and harbours. It had usually been divided into nine little states, each governed by a king having several cities under him. One of these cities was Citium, whence the island or its people had been known to the Jews and in the east by the name of Chittim. It had long shared the trade of the Mediterranean with the cities of Tyre and Sidon and Tarsus, and when those seaports fell under Babylon and Persia, Cyprus shared their fate. The large and safe harbours gave to this island a great value in the naval warfare between Egypt, Phenicia, and Asia Minor. Alexander had given it as his opinion that the command of the sea went with the island of Cyprus. When he held Asia Minor he called Cyprus the key to Egypt; and with still greater reason might Ptolemy, looking from Egypt, think that island the key to Phenicia. Accordingly he landed there with so large a force that he met with no resistance. He added Cyprus to the rest of his dominions. He banished the kings, and made Nicocreon governor of the whole island." It continued under the Ptolemies, sometimes united with Egypt, and sometimes under a separate prince of the same dynasty. The last of these princes, brother to Ptolemy Auletes, King of Egypt, incurred the enmity of P. Clodius Pulcher, who being taken prisoner by the Cilician pirates, sent to the King of Cyprus for money to pay his ransom. The King sent a sum which was too little. Clodius having recovered his liberty by other means, when he became tribune of the people obtained a decree making Cyprus a Roman province. M. Cato was sent to take possession, and the King hearing of this put himself to death. Cato seized upon the treasury, and sent a large booty to Rome. Cyprus thus became a Roman province. On the division of the empire it fell to the lot of the Byzantine emperors, and, after several vicissitudes, became a separate principality under a branch of the Comneni. Richard of England took it in 1191 and sold it to the Templars, whose oppression drove the people to revolt. Richard resumed the

sovereignty and gave it to Guy of Lusignan, the expelled King of Jerusalem, in 1192. The Lusignans retained it for nearly three centuries, which was a flourishing period for Cyprus. John III. of Lusignan died in 1458, leaving the kingdom to Charlotte, his only legitimate child, who married her cousin, Louis of Geneva, second son of the Duke of Savoy and of Anna of Cyprus. She was solemnly crowned at Lefkosia in 1460, but was soon after expelled by her natural brother James, assisted by the Mamelukes of Egypt. James married Catharine Cornaro, the daughter of a Venetian merchant, who brought him a large dowry. On this occasion the Venetian senate adopted her as daughter of St. Mark, and the marriage was celebrated in 1471. In 1473 James died, and his wife soon after bore a son, of whom Venice assumed the custody, and sent troops to garrison the island. The child dying while an infant, the senate persuaded Catharine, in 1489, to abdicate in their favour. Meanwhile Charlotte Lusignan had returned to Rome, where she died in 1487, bequeathing her claims to Charles, Duke of Savoy, in consequence of which the sovereigns of that dynasty assume to this day the titles of Kings of Cyprus and Jerusalem. The Venetians kept possession of Cyprus till 1570, when Selim II. sent a powerful force to invade the island. The Turks took Lefkosia by storm, and massacred about 20,000 people. They then laid seige to Famagosta, which was long and gallantly defended by the Proveditor-General, Bragadino. At last, in 1571, it capitulated, and the brave defender was flayed alive by the captors. His skin was filled with straw, and hung up to the yard-arm of the admiral's vessel. Venice erected a monument to his memory, and having ransomed his skin placed it in it. From that time the Turks have remained in possession of Cyprus. It now forms a pashalic in the Eyalet of the Djizairs, or islands which are governed by the Capitan Pasha.

The inhabitants are in general tall and well made; very hospitable, but, we read, "knavishly inclined."

Dr. Clarke, in his *Travels*, says:—"The interesting costume presented in the dress of the Cyprian ladies ought not to

pass unnoticed. Their head apparel was precisely modelled after the kind of calathus represented upon the Phœnician idols of the country and Egyptian statues. This was worn by women of all ranks, from the wives of the consuls to their slaves. Their hair, dyed of a fine brown colour, by means of a plant called "henna," hung behind in numerous long straight braids; and, in some ringlets disposed near the face, were fastened blossoms of the jessamine, strung together, upon slips from leaves of the palm-tree in a very curious and pleasing manner. Next to the Calmuck women, the Grecian are, of all others, best versed in cosmetic arts. They possess the valuable secret of giving a brown colour to the whitest locks, and also tinge the eyebrows the same hue, an act that would be highly prized in London and Paris. The most splendid colours are displayed in their habits, and these are very becoming to the girls of the island. The upper robe is always of scarlet, crimson, or green silk, embroidered with gold. Like other Greek women, they wear long scarlet pantaloons, fastened round the ankle, and yellow boots, with slippers of the same colour. Around the neck and from the head are suspended a profusion of gold coins, chains, and other trinkets. About their waists they have a large belt or zone, fastened in front by two large and heavily polished brass plates. They endeavour to make the waist as long as possible, and the legs consequently short. Naturally corpulent, they take no pains to diminish the size of their bodies by lacing, but seem rather vain of their bulk, exposing their bosoms at the same time in a manner highly unbecoming. Notwithstanding the extraordinary pains they use to disfigure their natural beauty by all manner of ill-selected ornament, the women of Cyprus are handsomer than those of any other Grecian island. They have a taller and more stately figure, and the features, particularly of the women of Nicosia, are regular and dignified, exhibiting that elevated cast of countenance so universally admired in the works of Greek artists. At present this kind of beauty seems peculiar to the women of Cyprus."

The account which Dr. Clarke has given us of the present state of this island is as melancholy as his account of the Fauna and insects. "Instead of a fertile land," says he, "covered with groves of fruit and fine woods once rendering it the paradise of the Levant, there is hardly upon earth a more wretched spot than it now exhibits. Few words may forcibly describe it: agriculture neglected, inhabitants oppressed, population destroyed, pestiferous air, contagion, poverty, indolence, desolation. Its antiquities alone render it worthy of resort, and these, if any person had leisure and opportunity to search for them, would amply repay the trouble. In this pursuit Cyprus may be considered as yet untrodden."

But Consul Lang in his report upon the Industrial Classes in the Island of Cyprus takes a more hopeful view. He writes:—

Industrial classes in the island may be divided into three categories.

1. Tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, cartwrights, and such like.

2. Labourers, inhabitants of towns, such as porters, boatmen, domestic servants, etc.

3. Agricultural labourers.

The workmen of the first supply solely, in their respective departments, the requirements of the population. Their work is of the simplest character, but suitable to the wants of a people having few luxurious tendencies and unwilling as well as unable to pay for a higher quality of work. The earnings of this class naturally vary according to the intelligence and activity of the workman, but may be said to range from 3*s.* to 5*s.* per diem.

The labourers of the second class are lower in the social scale than those of the first, and little or no intelligence is required of them in the discharge of their occupations. Their earnings, frequently very uncertain, vary from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* per diem.

Agricultural labourers are the most numerous class in the island. Their earnings vary according to the work upon which they are employed. During harvest-time their earnings may

amount to 3*s.* a day, but for the rest of the year they may be set down as from 11*d.* to 1*s.* 3*d.* a day for male, and half that for female labourers.

It will be evident from the above brief description that there is no opening in this island for European labourers under any of the three classes just alluded to. The class of occupations comprised in the first category is the only one in which Europeans might hope for success; but even in that class their hopes would be disappointed, for two reasons; first, because the superior work performed by European tradesmen would not receive its equivalent value; and, secondly, because a European tradesman would find it difficult and extremely irksome to live the intensely simple life to which the Oriental from infancy is habituated.

The condition of the industrial classes in this island is not brilliant, yet neither is it destitute of some advantages as compared with the same classes in England. There is here no scope for ambition, but, on the other hand, we do not find among the working-classes cases of such extreme despair and suffering as are witnessed in England. The nature of the climate renders the inhabitants of this island less disposed to exertion and *pre*disposed to a life of ease. The consequence is that the native labourer does not perform, nor is there exacted from him, half the work done by an European workman. Again, the simplicity and inexpensiveness of what may be termed the necessaries of life (although these are very different from what would be esteemed such in a more severe clime) is greatly in favour of the industrial classes in this country. Two examples may suffice to prove this: first, the comforts of a dwelling-house, while of primary importance in Europe, are a secondary consideration with a people accustomed to spend 9 months of the year, day and night, in the open air; second, the extremely low cost at which life in this country may be maintained was strikingly exhibited during a period of famine with which the island was afflicted in 1869. By personal observation during that period, I found that a family of 6 persons

could be maintained in health and activity on the small allowance of 40 lbs. of flour and 3 lbs. of olives per week. In ordinary years the cost of this allowance would not exceed 3*s.* 6*d.* a week.

In concluding this report, I am induced to refer to the only opening which this island appears to offer to an European population—namely, in agricultural pursuits; not as labourers but as farmers. Perfect security to life and property is an advantage possessed to a greater degree in this island than in any other part of Turkey. The soil is fertile, and may be had, either for purchase or upon lease, at most moderate rates. The cultivation of grain, cotton, vegetables, and fruits of all sorts, is largely profitable where economy and a moderate capital are combined with diligent effort. The great difficulty to be encountered by Europeans is in employing native labour without possessing a knowledge of the language of the country; but this difficulty would be obviated were the enterprise upon a sufficiently extensive scale to render native labour unnecessary. The climate is not unhealthy, but demands simplicity in diet and temperance in habits. Everywhere, to a certain extent, but nowhere more than in the East, success depends upon individual character, and the qualifications most essential for agricultural pursuits in this island are practical knowledge, economy and temperance. Capital administered with these qualifications would certainly find a handsome return in agricultural enterprise in Cyprus.

I. Purchasing Power of Money.

| — | Currency. | | Remarks. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Local. | British. | |
| | Piastres. | *s.* *d.* *s.* *d.* | |
| Labour:— | | | |
| 1st class per day . | 16 to 27 | 3 0 to 5 0 | In the necessaries of life £15 in Cyprus equals £25 in England. In luxuries £20 in England equals £30 in Cyprus. |
| 2nd „ „ . | 8 „ 13 | 1 6 „ 2 6 | |
| 3rd „ „ . | 5 „ 7 | 0 11 „ 1 3 | |
| Provisions:— | | *s.* *d.* | |
| Wheat per qr.. . | .. | 32 0 | |
| Meat per lb. . . | .. | 0 3 | |

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II. Matters of Health.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Diet* . . . . | Simple and temperate. |
| *Clothing* . . . | Light: woollen materials best. |
| *Lodging* . . . | Little better than shelter from the elements. |

III. Quality of Work.

Rude and simple in the extreme, but suited to the wants of the people.

R. H. Lang.

*Report upon the Commerce of Cyprus for* 1871.

In my Commercial Report for 1870 I had to notice the total failure of the grain crops from drought, and in my present I can only announce a very partial recovery in the agricultural districts.

*Grain.*—In a few districts of the island the grain crops of 1871 were fair in extent, but in the majority they were very poor. The rainfall at Larnaca barely reached 12 inches for the season, which might have sufficed had it been well distributed during the winter months, but there was a total absence of all rain during the months of January and February when the young crops stood most in need of it. In consequence, the utmost that can be said for the year 1871 is, that the position of the island did not become worse, and that the produce of grain did little more than suffice for local wants. By the return of exports annexed to this Report it will be observed that the value of grain exported in 1871 amounted only to £30,500 as against £168,000 in 1868.

*Cotton.*—The cotton crops of 1871 were even worse than those of 1870, both as regards quantity and quality; the cause of this is easily apparent. The influence of the drought of 1870 upon the perennial streams was only fully apparent in 1871, while the rainfall of the latter year was so small that it did not penetrate the sources of the streams. The total export of the staple in 1871 was 770,850 lbs. as against 2,065,000 in 1866.

*Locust Beans.*—The cultivation of this important article of

export from Cyprus continues to increase. The trees were affected by the prevailing drought, and the produce of 1871 was estimated to be 7,000 cruters less than that of 1870, but the growers found compensation in the relatively higher prices which they obtained for their stocks. The chief part of the produce is shipped to Russia, where it obtains better prices than in any other market in Europe.

*Salt.*—The produce of the salt lakes in the neighbourhood of Larnaca and Lincassol is a most valuable revenue to the Turkish Government. The increase in the value of the property is very remarkable. Thirty years ago the salt lakes of Larnaca were leased for £400, but they now produce a clear revenue of £20,000. Still this last amount very far from represents the profit which might be realised from this property. The supply of salt is unlimited, and at the present moment the Government have in stock sufficient for three years' demand. In the foolish hope of increasing revenue by exorbitantly raising the selling price, the Government some years ago advanced the price of salt to 18 paras per oke, at which it now stands in Cyprus. In Barbary, however, the price is fixed at 17 paras, and vessels find it for their interest to supply the Syrian demand for salt from Barbary, rather than from Cyprus. Not only do they find it an advantage of 17 per cent. in the price, but also a gain of at least 5 per cent. in weight, as compared with that given in Cyprus. It would manifestly be for the interest of the Government to reduce the price of salt in Cyprus to 16 paras, and give good weight, so that the purchases for Syria should be made here at the higher rate, rather than in Barbary at the lower.

## *Agriculture.*

The prosperity of the island depends on its agricultural interests, and it is therefore gratifying to report two features of progress which are apparent. First, the breadth of land sown is yearly on the increase, and this fact is clearly demonstrated by the increased value of the Government

tithes." These tithes were leased in 1865 for 5,500,000 paras; while it is fully expected that 7,000,000 will be obtained for those of 1872. An important increase in the wealth of the island is thus indicated. Second, there is evidently much greater care in the manner of cultivating; the land is better ploughed, the fields are better cleaned, and more attention is paid to the quality of the seeds employed. The destruction of locusts has certainly largely contributed to these results; and if the Government will only *laisser faire* and *laisser aller*, it is sure to find a rich advantage in increased tithes and in the fruits of a general prosperity. Unfortunately, there is now prevalent at Constantinople a mania for change in the system of taxation, which, as it is associated with ignorance of the first principles of political economy, threatens to be productive of great harm.

*Public Works.*

The only public work accomplished during the year 1871 is the laying down of a submarine cable between Latakia, on the Syrian coast, and the north-east extremity of the island. By this means, Nicosia, the capital of the island, is brought into telegraphic communication with the rest of the world. It is much to be desired, in the interests of commerce, that the land line should be extended to this port (Larnaka); and I am informed that this could be done at a cost of about 60,000 paras. What has been done may be hailed as another step made in the march of progress, which, from enlarged communication with the civilisation of Europe, is slowly, but surely, gaining impetus in Turkey.

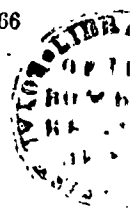
*Larnaka*, 1872.

The return of British shipping engaged in the direct trade in 1871, shows, *entered, nil;* cleared, 9: total tonnage, 7,407; value of cargoes, £19,933; engaged in the indirect, or carrying

trade, 13; with a total tonnage of 8,700; and value of cargoes, £5,900.

The return of the foreign shipping altogether trading with Cyprus during the same year stands as follows:—

| | Entered. | | Cleared. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Vessels. | Tonnage. | Vessels. | Tonnage. |
| British . . | 11 | 8,103 | 11 | 8,103 |
| French . . | 5 | 1,315 | 5 | 1,315 |
| Austrian. . | 61 | 103,514 | 61 | 103,514 |
| Russian . . | 10 | 1,074 | 10 | 1,074 |
| Italian . . | 31 | 6,591 | 31 | 6,591 |
| Greek . . | 98 | 14,242 | 99 | 14,797 |
| Turkish . . | 446 | 17,150 | 437 | 16,872 |
| | 662 | 151,989 | 654 | 152,266 |



THE RETURN OF THE IMPORTS INTO THE ISLAND IN 1871.

| | £. |
|---|---|
| Cotton manufactures . . . . . | 55,000 |
| Woollen . . . . . | 10,000 |
| Leather . . . . . | 10,000 |
| Tobacco and timber . . . . . | 7,500 |
| Olive oil . . . . . | 10,000 |
| Sugar . . . . . | 6,500 |
| Coffee . . . . . | 4,700 |
| Salt fish . . . . . | 1,000 |
| Rice . . . . . | 7,500 |
| Butter . . . . . | 10,000 |
| Hardware . . . . . | 300 |
| Iron . . . . . | 700 |
| Earthenware and glass . . . . . | 500 |
| Foreign spices . . . . . | 800 |
| Soap . . . . . | 3,000 |
| Miscellaneous . . . . . | 20,000 |
| | 147,500 |

THE RETURN OF THE EXPORTS FROM THE ISLAND IN 1871.

| | | | £. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cotton . lbs. | 770,850 | valued at | 22,062 | exported to | G. B. 186,750 lbs. |
| Salt . . tons | 7,000 | „ | 27,000 | „ | T. |
| Locust beans „ | 8,490 | „ | 42,450 | „ | R. |
| Wheat . qrs. | 15,000 | „ | 22,500 | „ | G. B. 1,700 qrs. |
| Barley . „ | 10,000 | „ | 8,000 | „ | G. B. 1,800 „ |
| Wine . galls. | 514,800 | „ | 12,800 | „ | A. T. |
| Raki . . . | .. | „ | 2,000 | „ | T. |
| Madder . cwts. | 3,541 | „ | 7,082 | „ | G. B. 3,466 cwt. |
| Fruits (dried) | .. | „ | 1,000 | „ | T. |
| Silk . . . | .. | „ | 5,500 | „ | F. T. |
| Linseed . . | .. | „ | 700 | „ | F. |
| Sesame . . | .. | „ | .. | „ | .. |
| Skins . . | .. | „ | 8,166 | „ | G. B. £1,450. |
| Wool. . lbs. | 537,827 | „ | 10,868 | „ | G. B. 34,368 lbs. |
| Miscellanies | .. | „ | 33,300 | „ | |
| | | | £203,428 | | |

(G. B., Great Britain; T., Turkey; R., Russia; A., Austria; F., France. The share of Great Britain in all is shown.)

DETAILS OF THE EXPORTS TO GREAT BRITAIN IN 1871.

| | | | £. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cotton . . . . lbs. | 186,750 | valued at | 5,025 |
| Wheat . . . . qrs. | 1,700 | „ | 2,500 |
| Barley . . . . „ | 1,800 | „ | 1,500 |
| Madder roots . . cwts. | 3,466 | „ | 6,900 |
| Skins . . . . . | .. | „ | 1,450 |
| Wool . . . . lbs. | 84,368 | „ | 1,757 |
| Sundries . . . | .. | „ | 3,000 |
| | | | £22,132 |

*Report by Acting Consul Riddell upon the Commerce of Cyprus for the Year* 1873.

In my report for the year 1872, I mentioned that, owing to the want of sufficient rain, the harvests of 1873 were likely to turn out a failure. This has proved to be the case to an extent even exceeding the worst apprehensions, and unfortu-

nately applies to nearly all the products of the island; so that not only have large quantities of grain been imported at high prices, with an accompanying strain upon the financial resources of the island, but also, there having been little produce for exportation, trade has suffered severely throughout the year. The prices of grain continued until the end of June at about the same as stated in my report of 1872; say £1 14*s.* for wheat, and 16*s.* 6*d.* for barley, per imperial quarter. By the end of August it would become apparent that a considerable importation of grain from abroad would be required to carry through the winter; but although imports then commenced, and prices also began to advance, it was not until the last two months of the year that any serious rise in prices took place. By the end of the year, and notwithstanding considerable importations of grain from Turkey, prices here had risen to £2 16*s.* for wheat, and £1 17*s.* for barley.

Owing to prices being continuously advanced in Syria, Caramania, and Anatolia, from whence supplies for Cyprus could be brought, imports not only cost more money to the importer, but supplies began also to fall off in quantity; so that by the end of March of the present year stocks in Cyprus were well nigh exhausted, notwithstanding that prices had risen to about £3 15*s.* for wheat and £2 7*s.* for barley, with an insufficient supply for the wants of the island till next harvest. Great numbers of the quasi-starving peasants were obliged to subsist on the edible roots of such indigenous plants as they could dig up in the fields, using also locust beans to a large extent in lieu of cereals. The tithes of the year collected by the Government amounted to only a small amount, which had all to be given out to the peasant farmers for seed, without which they had not the means of replanting their fields for the harvests of 1874.

Altogether, 1873 has proved in every respect one of the most disastrous years remembered in Cyprus, and owing to the great scarcity and high price of food, the borders of famine have been touched and the hardships and suffering are great.

Fortunately the rains commenced in November, and continued, with unusual abundance, till so late even as the end of March 1874. This fortunate occurrence served to revive and sustain the hope of the entire population, and abundant harvests are looked forward too in 1874. The winter was unusually wet and cold. The rich and extensive grain-producing district of Massaouri has been abundantly watered by the descent of the torrents, and the grain fields were sown under more favourable and auspicious circumstances than have been experienced these many years past.

As regards cotton, the result of the crop of 1872 turned out very deficient in quantity and inferior in quality. The influences which caused such an unfortunate result, were alluded to in my report of 1872, but the yield of the whole crop fell much below the estimates then formed. In the accompanying Table of reports (No. 5), the quantity of raw cotton exported in 1873 is shown as 827,704 lbs., but of this, down to the end of the year, over 32,980 lbs. belong to the crop of 1873. The gathering of cotton in Cyprus rarely begins earlier than October, and there is none ready for export before November. Only a very insignificant quantity was exported to Great Britain in 1873, owing in part to the want of regular opportunities of shipment, and also that, down to about the middle of the year, the prices obtained for raw cotton in the markets of Marseilles and Trieste were relatively much higher than those current at the same period in Liverpool; hence the bulk of the shipments in 1873 went to foreign ports, as shown in the Table of Exports. From this it will be seen that of a total export amounting to 827,704 lbs., only 19,430 lbs. went direct to Great Britain. Prices here, based upon quotations of value in the Mediterranean ports, became greatly inflated, and there is too much reason to believe that very great losses have been sustained by exporters. The crop of 1874, owing to the larger area of cotton land which the torrents have permitted to be well watered, will it is expected be both large and good, unless subjected, as in 1873, to unusual and deleterious influences.

The production and export of sheep wool in 1873 having been of all kinds 478,860 lbs., rather exceeds the average yield. This quantity, however, comprises 43,040 lbs. of old wool, *i. e.*, wool which has been used for various domestic purposes, and which the poverty of the owners has obliged them to sell to procure subsistence. Deducting this, the yield stands at 435,820 lbs.

The pasturage having been early dried up, the flocks were reduced to a very poor condition, and the rapid growth of new grass which succeeded the first fall of rain produced great mortality, so that the quantity of wool to be raised in 1874 will be probably below the average in quantity, but the quality superior.

The quantity of madder roots produced in 1873 has hardly fallen off, in spite of its reduction in value in Europe. The falling off in the amount sent to Great Britain is remarkable, being over 230 cwts. against 4,930 cwts. in 1872. Of the whole exported, 4,250 cwts went to France; it would appear therefore that prices are there more remunerative than in England. Growers in Cyprus are turning their madder-root lands to other purposes, as they affirm that present prices make other crops more paying. I regret that I am unable to report any important public works completed or undertaken in the island. The extension of the telegraph wires from Nicosia to Larnaka has been commenced. The mercantile classes of Larnaka, in their anxiety to obtain the boon, have contributed £1,000 towards the cost of construction.

The material prosperity of this island depending, as it does, mainly upon its products, of which grain forms the most important, it appears a matter of regret in every point of view that the Imperial Government should not have exempted Cyprus from the additional impost of 2½ per cent. upon all tithes due to the State, to take effect from the 13th of March, 1874, thus adding one-fourth to this already heavy tax, and raising the rate from 10 to 12½ per cent. Such a measure applied throughout the empire, and embracing all kinds of products, may be deemed at any time a most questionable policy

in the best interests of the State; and applied to Cyprus immediately after a series of bad harvests, which culminated last year, as I have said, in the nearest approach to actual famine, and with the peasant farmers reduced to actual poverty, it can only be viewed as a most impolitic if not really unjust impost. Nor must I omit to mention the greatly increased rate of the current value of moneys which has taken place in Cyprus during the year 1873, mainly owing to the large importation of copper money. The Imperial Ottoman Bank Agency here maintains a fixed rate of currency, their £ sterling being 114 piastres; and but for the check which this establishment exercises upon the currency, it is impossible to guess to what abusive rates the coins in circulation might attain. At the beginning of the year, gold coins circulated in commerce at an agio of only 1 per cent. to 2 per cent. on the bank rates, whilst the Reshlik (or base) currency was at par. At the close of the year the difference had risen to nearly 20 per cent., the £ sterling circulating at 130·134 piastres. I need not dwell on the sufficiently obvious depreciation thereby in the value of landed and other real property when transactions are conducted in piastres. For a time (but only for a time) the change operates in favour of exporters, who effect the purchase of produce in piastres with the £ sterling at 130 piastres in lieu of 114 piastres; but it is manifestly against the importer, who must also sell in piastres, and be paid at the same rate, whilst he has to remit the cost of his goods in sterling value: in other terms, the rate of exchange, which at the beginning of the year was about 114 piastres per £ sterling, is now at 130 piastres, without anything nearly approximative in the currency price of the imported articles. Apply this to debts and obligations due in piastres, and entered into long previously, but which must now be liquidated at current rates, and the ruinous consequences to the creditor become easily apparent.

*Larnaka*, 1874.

RETURN of BRITISH SHIPPING ENGAGED in DIRECT TRADE in 1873 SHEWS a TOTAL TONNAGE of 3,034 TONS, with CARGOES VALUED at £2245; ENGAGED in INDIRECT TRADE, ONE VESSEL VALUED at £1,800. THE RETURNS for ALL FOREIGN SHIPPING STANDS as FOLLOWS:—

| | Entered. | | Cleared. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Vessels. | Tonnage. | Vessels. | Tonnage. |
| British . . . . | 6 | 3,800 | 5 | 3,464 |
| French . . . | 6 | 2,158 | 6 | 2,158 |
| Austrian. . . | 55 | 101,375 | 55 | 101,375 |
| Italian . . . | 3 | 609 | 3 | 609 |
| Russian . . . | 4 | 670 | 4 | 670 |
| Greek . . . | 15 | 1,518 | 15 | 1,518 |
| Turkish . . . | 300 | 6,615 | 300 | 6,615 |
| | 389 | 116,745 | 388 | 116,409 |

THE RETURN of IMPORTS INTO the ISLAND in 1873.

| | |
|---|---|
| Grain . . . . . | 35,000 |
| Tobacco . . . . . | 10,250 |
| Butter . . . . . | 1,220 |
| Salt fish . . . . . | 810 |
| Soap . . . . . | 3,600 |
| Matches . . . . . | 1,050 |
| Writing-paper . . . . . | 500 |
| Glassware . . . . . | 1,235 |
| Manufactured goods . . . . . | 22,800 |
| Copper and iron . . . . . | 1,220 |
| Rum . . . . . | 500 |
| Coffee . . . . . | 1,700 |
| Leather . . . . . | 12,780 |
| Rice . . . . . | 2,480 |
| Woollen twist and prints . . . . . | 4,000 |
| Petroleum . . . . . | 1,450 |
| Earthenware . . . . . | 1,185 |
| Sugar . . . . . | 2,580 |
| Sundries . . . . . | 9,885 |
| | 124,245 |

THE RETURNS OF EXPORT FROM THE ISLAND IN 1873.

| | £. |
|---|---|
| Cotton | 26,500 |
| Wool | 8,700 |
| Madder | 6,114 |
| Lamb and kid skins | 3,730 |
| Sheep and goat do. | 914 |
| Ox and cow hides | 61 |
| Rags | 3,686 |
| Linseed | 900 |
| Sumac | 90 |
| Terra timber | 600 |
| Wine | 2,035 |
| Locust beans | 1,800 |
| | 55,130 |

DETAILS OF TRADE WITH GREAT BRITAIN FOR 1870–73.

| | 1870. | 1871. | 1872. | 1873. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £. | £. | £. | £. |
| Cotton | 10,629 | 5,025 | 2,890 | 550 |
| Locust beans | 1,700 | .. | .. | .. |
| Madder | 5,997 | 6,900 | 13,350 | 360 |
| Skins | 500 | 1,450 | 2,233 | 365 |
| Wheat | .. | 2,500 | .. | .. |
| Barley | .. | 1,500 | 2,000 | .. |
| Wool | .. | 1,757 | 947 | 395 |
| Rags | .. | .. | 3,306 | 110 |
| Sumac | .. | .. | 1,238 | 90 |

For further information about Cyprus, see Rollin's *Ancient History*; Mariti's *Travels*; Sonnini's *Travels*; Drs. Unger and Kotschy, *Die Insel Cypern*; Cesnola's *Cyprus, its Antiquities, &c.*; Dr. Clarke's *Travels*; Paruta, *Histoire Venetiane*; Botta, *Storia d'Italia*; Macgregor's *Commercial Statistics*; *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*; also the botanical works of La Bellardier, Aucher Eloy, Le Feber, Sibthorp's *Flora Græca*. Gaudrey and Damour; Franz von Löher, *Cypern*; Iassonides, *Les Iles de la Méditerranée*; Collas, *Turkey*; Sharpe, *History of Egypt*.

*(Since this pamphlet appeared other sources of information about Cyprus have been rendered available to the public, and from these the following pages, bringing our knowledge of the Island up to the present date, have been compiled. A summary of the telegraphic intelligence received from Cyprus since its cession to Great Britain will be found appended.)*

As regards the climate, so much disputed by various correspondents of the Press, Consul Lang, writing on July 18th, says: "The inhabitants enjoy good, nay robust health; they live to a great age generally, and are subject to few ailments. From July to October the heat is considerable, although nothing to be compared with that of India. The sirocco winds, so distressing in both Egypt and Syria, are greatly cooled down by their passage over the sea before they reach Cyprus, and daily a fresh cool breeze springs up from the south-west, lasting from about 9 o'clock in the morning till 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The thermometer in Cyprus marks the same heat in summer as it does on the coast of Syria.

"The cause of unhealthiness in certain towns is quite local and easily removed. Thus round Larnaka and Famagousta there are marshes which infect the air, and are apt to induce fever and ague in summer. During my residence in Larnaka I was able, by public subscription, to bring under cultivation the worst of the two marshes near that town, and to introduce by iron pipes a good supply of water into the houses. The effect was most salutary to the health of the town, and more extensive works of a similar kind, with due attention to the cleansing of the town, will remove all the existing causes of unhealthiness. Immediate attention to the condition of Famagousta is imperative. That town is encumbered with *débris*, and the covered pits from which the Turks assaulted the walls in the 16th century are stagnant marshes to-day. The whole town should be thoroughly cleansed, the marshes dried up, and a supply of good fresh water led into the town by iron pipes. These are

works which were all projected, and for which estimates were made while I was in Cyprus, but the impecuniosity of the Government and the instability of the governors prevented their execution. It would be wise to send out at once a certain number of iron pipes necessary for conducting pure water into the towns. They will be needed at Famagousta, at Nicosia, and, with the increased population at Larnaka, the main pipes laid down in my day might advantageously be replaced by others of larger volume. Famagousta, with a moderate expenditure, may become what it was in the time of the Venetians, an agreeable and healthy town capable of containing 30,000 inhabitants. It was entirely built of cut stone, taken from the ruins of ancient Salamis, and all the stones necessary for the rebuilding of the town exist *in loco*."

The late J. Iassonides, who died of old age at Kontzovendi, in Cyprus, in 1871, concludes his book, *Les Iles de la Méditerranée*, with these words: "For forty years I have been going from isle to isle, ascertaining their political, commercial, and social aspect, and Cyprus is my favourite; it is a little world in itself, and here do I wish to die. My limited means will keep me in comparative luxury. Although old, I am getting strong and feel young; no wild beasts or venomous reptiles disturb my solitude; my water is sweet and cool, my wine is nectar, and my food plain but good."

Bearing further testimony to the salubrity of the climate, Murray's 'Handbook to Turkey in Asia' says: "It (Cyprus) has hitherto been little visited by travellers, owing to erroneous statements regarding it (particularly as to the insalubrity of the climate), which are so alarming as to deter English tourists. This reputation is in no way borne out by facts, as there is no reason why travellers should not visit the island with as great impunity as any other part of the Levant. It cannot be denied that fevers exist during the warm months, but they are not of a dangerous nature, and seldom or never prove fatal. They are attributable to sleeping exposed to the night dews and to the use of improper nourishment, such as cucumbers, water-melons,

and other raw fruits, which do not afford the necessary support to the system to enable it to resist the excessive heats. This opinion is confirmed by the fact that these fevers rarely attack Europeans or the opulent class of the inhabitants, who are more careful in their diet." In the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (Nov. 1861) occurs the following with regard to Paphos:—"Malignant fevers prevail here, which carry off in a few days men of the strongest constitution. In the other parts of the island it is very rare that these fevers are fatal. They are intermittent, and in order to cure them sulphate of quinine is taken in quantities that in other countries would be thought likely to have dangerous results." Speaking of the climate generally, the *Revue* says: "Fever apart, Cyprus has hardly any maladies; ophthalmia and dysentery, so terrible in Egypt, are little to be feared. In ancient times the plague caused terrible ravages, annihilating the populations of several villages, but for a long time past no sign of it has been seen." The Report of the French Minister of Agriculture and Commerce for 1854 contains (p. 151) words to much the same effect.

A resident of the island, now in England, writes on this important subject of health: "The climate is very similar to that of Crete; the winter is short and cold, the summer long and hot, but not oppressively so on account of the sweet Mediterranean breezes which make the evenings particularly cool; and people of regular habits will find it not only free from sickness but beneficial, if they do not indulge too freely in the beautiful fruit which grows nearly wild in every part of the island." He then goes on to say that the English farmer will reap a good harvest with moderate toil and careful study of the seasons; labour is cheap and plentiful, but the natives, like most Orientals, are lazy and want looking after. Manures, artificial manures, are unknown, the soil being rich in itself. Farmers should provide themselves with tools, &c., before starting, but as horses and mules are cheap and the surrounding countries rich in them, English animals ought not to be taken there, except for breeding purposes.

The vines are richer than in any other country, and when properly cultivated will supply us with the wine Homer praised so much. Throughout Turkey in Europe it is used as a cure for consumption, and the Americans have of late been drawing large supplies of it. Aromatic tobacco of the most delicate quality is extensively grown, principally for the St. Petersburg market. Fine hard timber is plentiful, notwithstanding the enormous quantities that have been cut down recklessly by Government, and a Turin firm are now exhibiting some rare specimens in Paris; sleepers for railway and other purposes will be found in abundance, especially when the existing roads are repaired and others constructed; rice, beans, wheat, barley, olives, raisins, locust beans, cotton, hemp, wool, silk, beeswax, honey, madder, and beetroot are extensively exported. "The mines," he says, "are rich in copper, and proof of gold existing is that large pieces of the precious metal are daily washed down by the mountain streams; capitalists will find the mines, once worked by Greeks and others but now abandoned, a source of unlimited wealth." Coal is also found, but through lack of enterprise the mines have never been touched; mineral and lake salt is abundant, and ozokerit exists not far from Lefkosia and also at Citti. "The buildings," he writes, "are not worth mentioning, and accommodation will no doubt be in demand; but with English builders, cheap and plentiful materials, villages will soon grow into towns. Intending settlers should provide themselves with a good supply of Malta outfit, also some warm winter clothing." To commerce, however, a most important point is the harbour accommodation offered by the island, and on this subject much information has transpired. The resident already quoted says: "On account of the harbours being nearly useless, also for want of breakwater and quays, vessels lay-to at a distance, and load and discharge cargo by lighters, the operations being often stopped during bad weather."

The most promising port on the southern shore is Limasol, off which ships can anchor in from twelve to six fathoms of water, with a good bottom.

Collas, in his book on Turkey, published by Dentu in 1864, writes (we translate from his work): "Famagousta has a harbour, it is true, but in ruins, sand-logged and dilapidated; it might nevertheless be easily converted into one of the finest harbours of the Mediterranean. . . . The port, such as it is, extends over some seventy-eight acres, and there would be little trouble in deepening it to ten feet, but at present only some four acres are available for vessels. The harbour is formed by two islands, the first connected with the mainland by a jetty 430 yards in length, still in perfect condition; while the two islands are joined together by a second jetty, at present in bad repair, but which it would be easy to make as good as ever, and thus check the action of the sea, which is for ever bringing in the sand and slime that have encroached upon the harbour. The second island, again, is also connected with the mainland by a short jetty. By artificial extension the area of the harbour might be increased to more than 140 acres." Meanwhile, the chief port is Larnaka,* and to its present unsuitability as a harbour there are many witnesses. The Admiralty account of the port (p. 265) states that "landing in the winter season is often impracticable; and in summer, while the sea-breeze is blowing, it is very disagreeable;" but it is needless to multiply testimony on this head. While as to Famagousta, above described, we learn from the same source that "the ruins of a mole are still to be seen; it formed a small port, protected from the south-east, but is nearly filled up; small vessels belonging to the island lay up in it during the winter. Large vessels anchor off the town in about seventeen fathoms; stiff mud; inside, twelve fathoms; the bottom is rock and sand close up to the reef that runs parallel to the shore, inside of which small vessels obtain good anchorage in four fathoms." About three miles to the north of

* Larnaka—which some misinformed person has told the public is so called from the Turkish word for "coffin," owing to the "pestilent" climate of the place—is derived, it may as well be stated, from the Greek word for a funeral urn or tomb, owing to the numerous rock-cut tombs by which it is surrounded. In Turkish it is called Casaba-Tuzla, which means "the salt-pits district," there being large salt-pits in the neighbourhood.

Famagousta is the ancient port of Salamis, now only a shallow basin; in the roadstead abreast of it is good anchorage, with from sixteen to ten fathoms; mud.

With regard to the trade prospects opened up by British occupation of the island, the resident already quoted writes: "England can supply Cyprus with every description of goods, and merchants may rely upon getting good returns for their capital if they select suitable articles. Coals, hardware, provisions, wines, spirits, oilman's stores, drapery, drugs, agricultural implements, household furniture, petroleum, glass, and other such goods are all certain to be in great demand." The Greek and Maltese merchants have already commenced operations for acquiring their share of the coming commerce, and the trading communities of Syria, Smyrna, Jaffa, and Alexandria are all upon the alert. Land in Cyprus, so a telegram of the 17th informs us, rose tenfold in value immediately after the first news was received of the cession of the island to Great Britain. On this subject the "Ex-Engineer-in-Chief for Syria" writes: "The Mussulman law vests the freehold of land in Cyprus in the head of the State, and no subject can hold landed property in his own right. Land tenure is dependent upon cultivating or otherwise making productive the property in occupation, and all holdings neglected for three years lapse *ipso facto* to the State. The tax of 10 per cent. on the produce is thus virtually a rental, the non-payment of which is punished by ejectment. The greater part of Cyprus is thus Crown land, seeing that not one-third is under cultivation."

At ten knots an hour, it will take four days' continuous steaming to reach Larnaka from Malta, whilst communication can be had with Port Said, at the mouth of the Suez Canal, in twenty-four hours at the same rate, and with Marsene, the port of Cilicia, in sixteen hours. The port of Larnaka is connected by telegraph cable with Latakia, on the Syrian coast, which brings it into communication with the Turkish land wires that extend to Constantinople.

The Austrian Lloyd's Steamship Company has now established

a weekly service of steamers from Trieste to Cyprus *viâ* Alexandria.

The inhabitants may be roughly estimated at 90,000, of whom 60,000 are Greeks, 25,000 Turks, and the rest Fellahs or Arabs. They are good-natured, honest, quiet, and hospitable, but must be taught to work. The principal language is Greek, Turkish and Italian being spoken by the upper classes only. "My personal experience of the island," so writes an ex-consul, "enables me to state that in summer it does not resemble a desert, as has been said by old authorities; many mountains are perpetually covered with snow, and in summer they water the land by their numerous rivers and streams. These will no doubt be used as canals until railways are constructed. The local farmers often contrive to turn these streams on to their own land, but are not scientific enough to make proper use of them, and it is here that the English engineer is wanted. As regards the aridity of the soil in the hot weather, I know that I could always buy enough vegetables for eight adults for the small sum of threepence, and good mutton for about threepence halfpenny, beef being one halfpenny dearer. As regards snakes, I have travelled all over the island on foot and on horseback, and never was I or any of my acquaintances attacked by snakes or other venomous reptiles. Snakes exist in the north-west part, but they are not poisonous, and the superstitious people consider it unlucky to molest them."

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The following is a brief summary of events since the cession of the island :—

On the 8th of July, the *Daily Telegraph* announced the fact that on the 4th of June Turkey had accorded to Great Britain the right to occupy Cyprus, and on the 9th of July orders were received by the 42nd, 71st, and 101st English regiments, and the 25th Madras Infantry, 26th Bombay N. I., 9th Bengal Lancers, and artillery, to embark for the island. The troopship *Canara* left on the 10th with the commissariat staff and the Indian Sappers and Miners, to prepare for the reception of

the troops. Meanwhile the squadron, under Lord John Hay, consisting of the following ironclads: *Minotaur*, *Black Prince* (Capt. H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh), *Raleigh*, and *Pallas*; gun-vessels *Foxhound* and *Bittern*, had been cruising off the coast, and on the 11th these were joined by H.M.'s despatch-boat *Salamis*, having on board Mr. W. Baring, Second Secretary of the Embassy at the Porte, and Samih Pasha.

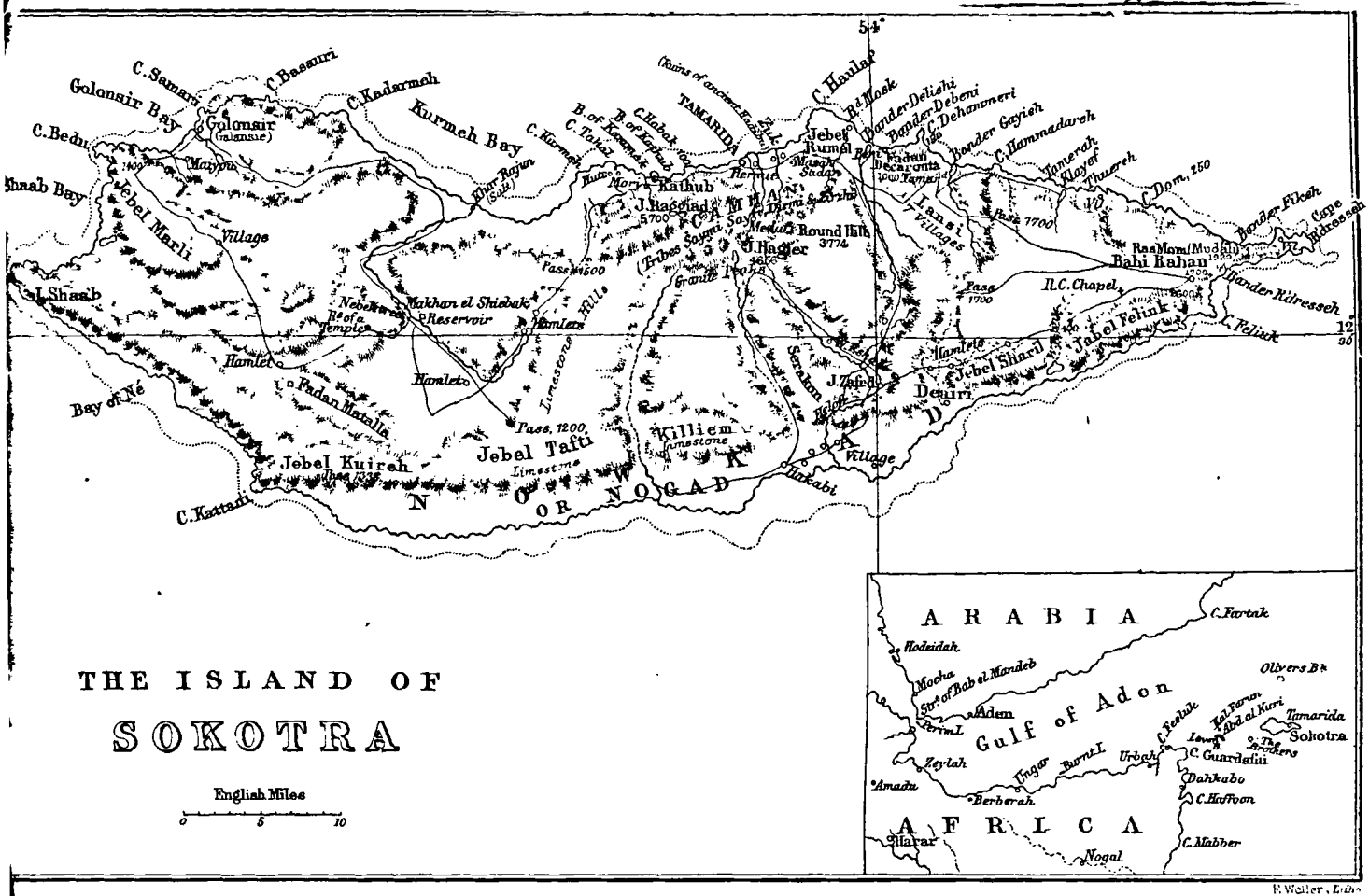
On the 12th orders were issued for the chief residents to be summoned to meet the representatives of Great Britain and Turkey, and after the firman of the Sultan acceding the right of occupation had been read, the British Standard was hoisted.

On the 13th Lord John Hay landed with a detachment of fifty marines, and after addressing an assembly of the inhabitants, and informing them that no administrative changes were at present to be introduced, pronounced the words, "I take possession of this island in the name of Queen Victoria," to which the people responded enthusiastically with cries of "Live the British Queen!"

Emigration from Egypt at once commenced on a large scale, and the commercial communities of the Greek, Egyptian, and Levantine coasts lost no time in sending their representatives to secure such share as they could of the coming trade. Land rose tenfold in value.

On the 17th the rest of the troops embarked from Malta in the *Himalaya*, *Tamar*, and *Orontes* troopships, and fifteen transports, General Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had been appointed Governor, being in the first with Sir A. Doyle, Crown Advocate, as legal adviser; Mr. G. Kellner, lately of the Indian Accountant-General's Department, to superintend finance; Mr. Robson, to superintend the customs; and Mr. French, the postal arrangements.

The *Himalaya* arrived on the 22nd, the people receiving the Governor's proclamation with cheers, and warmly cheering the Duke of Edinburgh as he embarked after the ceremony.


THE ISLAND OF
SOKOTRA
English Miles
0 5 10
ARABIA
AFRICA
Gulf of Aden
Sokotra
Gulonsir Bay
Kurmeh Bay
Shaab Bay
Bay of N.
Jebel Kuireh
Jebel Tafti
Killiem
Jebel Felink
Jebel Shiarl
Deuiri
Rathub
Hadibo
Mocha
Aden
Berbera
Zeylah
Amudu
Dahkabo
Nogal
C. Kattandu
C. Felink
C. Haulap
C. Hammadareh
C. Dehamneri
C. Kadarmeh
C. Basauri
C. Saman
C. Bedu
Jebel Manli
Jebel Shaab
Jebel Rumal
Jebel Mosk
Bahi Rahan
Ras Momi
Tamarida
Olivers B.
Abd al Kuri
Strs of Bab el Mandeb
Perim I.
Socotra
Ungar
Burnt I.
C. Guardafui
C. Hafoon
C. Mabber
Hollaer
Round Hill
3774
Pass 1700
Pass 1200
Pass 1500
Limestone Hills
Granite
Serpentine
Village
Hamlet
Ruins of ancient Eudaimon
Tamarida
Tribes Soymi
Tribes Sayami
Makhan el Shiebak
Reservoir
Nebi Ayub
Rt of a Temple
Padan Matalla
Dhag 1035
Mauyna
Mor
Hermit
Masjid Sadar
Medina
Dirmi
Tamerah
Hayef
Thuereh
Dom. 250
Border Fikeh
Cape Ritresseh
Border Gayieh
Bander Deliahi
Bander Deberi
Bander Ritresseh
Jansi 7 villages
Decarenta
1000 Tamarida
Kuteo
Kahub
Kahub
Kathub
Kathub
Kath

# SOKOTRA.

NOTE.—The only trustworthy authority on Sokotra is Lieutenant Wellsted, who in 1834 made a thorough exploration of the island. In Vol. IV. of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, this report will be found *in extenso*. Other sources of information utilised by the writer of the article in the *Geographical Magazine*, to which the following pages are so largely indebted, are Guillain's *Documents sur l'Afrique Orientale*; Heughlin's *Mittheilungen* for 1861; M. H. Capitaine's *l'Explorateur*; *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, Vols. VI., VII., XV.; Yule's *Marco Polo*; Huet's *Histoire du Commerce des Anciens*; Sprengel's *Alte Geographie Arabiens*; Faria y Souza, *Asia*; Barro's *Decadas da Asia*; *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. V.; Taylor's *India Directory*. In Lieutenant Wellsted's report some additional authorities will be found quoted.

THE island of Sokotra, upon which the British flag has recently been hoisted, lies 148 miles east of Cape Guardafui (the most easterly point of the mainland of Africa), and directly, therefore, in the route of ships from the Red Sea to India. From its position it should be able to command a large trade; and that, in turn, France, Portugal, and Turkey have contemplated its annexation proves that this fact has long been recognised. It measures 82 miles in length and 20 miles in width, so that its area amounts to about 1600 square miles. It may be described, generally, as a table-land, varying from 700 to 1900 feet in height, resting on hills of limestone and, on the north, a granite range which encircle the island and abut more or less precipitously upon the sea, from which, however, their bases are separated by plains varying from two to four miles in width. The granitic range above mentioned, which supports no vegetation except a species of moss, attains in places a height of 4600 feet, and is varied by porphyry and other igneous rocks; while the plains referred to are for the most part sandy, diversified in

places with hillocks covered with grass or low scrub and, especially in the southern plain, Nowkad or Nogad, with dunes of shifting sand During the heavy rains of the monsoons numerous streams, rising from the different hill ranges, rush with considerable rapidity across the island, but in the hot weather become nearly dry—those in the neighbourhood of Tamarida and a few others being alone perennial. The island for the most part is absolutely sterile, but across the table-land, as will be seen from the map, run valleys of extraordinary fertility, while the landscape in the neighbourhood of the capital itself affords glimpses of scenery of singular beauty. It must not be forgotten, however, that during the hotter months all the beauty derived from luxuriant vegetation passes away, and that the island then assumes the parched and arid aspect characteristic of the neighbouring mainland. Nor must it be overlooked that great differences also exist between the east and west of the island, the latter being incomparably the more fertile and, so says Lieutenant Wellsted, "in places not inferior in scenery to England." The climate differs from that of Arabia in being comparatively cool, for the monsoon passing over so large an expanse of water keeps the temperature fairly moderate, while the elevation of the hills secures to those who wish to escape the excessive heat a certain asylum. The north-east monsoon blows from October to April, after which heavy rain falls, the average of the thermometer during these months ranging from 70° to 85°. These are, therefore, the pleasantest months in the year, but owing to the constant squalls on the coast they are also the most unsafe for navigation. This is the more particularly felt as the island possesses no good harbour. Tamarida affords a tolerable anchorage, except during the north-east monsoon, and Golonsir Bay, Shaáb Bay, Ghubbet Né, Bander R'dresseh, Bander Fikeh, Bander Garrieh, and Bander Delishi, are all more or less serviceable for shipping during one or other of the monsoons.

Tamarida, as the capital of the island, perhaps deserves to be called a town, but its inhabitants do not number more than

100, and though capable of containing a population of many times that number, it is at present composed chiefly of uninhabited dwellings; giving occasion for the remark that it contains "treble the number of houses that it does inhabitants, and of tombs more than ten times the number of both combined." This is due, says Lieutenant Wellsted, largely to the fact that its population consists entirely of Arabs, whose dirty habits of life and sickly physique render them peculiarly liable to every malady. The houses, built of soft limestone and coral, are usually two storeys high, of which the upper, set apart for the women, have flat roofs, surrounded by high parapets. The neighbouring plain is naturally irrigated by three perennial streams, and possesses an exceedingly fertile soil, and if, therefore, immigration could be encouraged, the means of support for a much larger population would be found close at hand. Lieutenant Wellsted in his report emphasises repeatedly the capabilities of the island for further development, and in one place says: "The whole of the land in the vicinity of the granite peaks is in the highest degree susceptible of cultivation. Grain, fruit, and vegetables might be reared to any extent in the plains near Tamarida and among the rich valleys in the direction of Ras Mamse. The hill faces might be terraced in the same manner as in Yemen and Palestine. In a word, if it were not for the prevailing sloth and ignorance which exist among its inhabitants, Sokotra might in a few seasons become as celebrated for the extent and variety of its productions as it is now remarkable for the want of them."

Kathub, a fishing hamlet, and Golonsir (Galansie), a village of some fifty families, are the only other "places of importance." Beni, to the east of Tamarida, is the headquarters of a large population of Arabs and Bedouins. The former are the mixed offspring of Arabs, Hindustanis, Somali Africans, and Portuguese half-castes, but preserve a certain common resemblance by speaking the same language, wearing the same dress, and professing the same debased form of Mohammedanism. The Bedouins, on the other hand, possess all the characteristics

of a well-defined and separate community, and may be considered the aborigines of the island. They are divided into families, each occupying a defined area, and presided over by an elder, with whom nominally judicial authority rests. As a race, they may be described as comely, for the men are tall and well made, with curling, though not negroidal hair, and abundant beard, whiskers and moustachios, while the eyes, mouth and nose are all so well formed as to have given rise to the conjecture that they are of Jewish or European descent. The women are described as prepossessing, and often remarkably pretty, the complexion being generally maize-coloured, and the skin clear and soft. They have adopted none of the habits of the Arabs, —the women, for instance, going unveiled—but they profess the Mohammedan religion, though observing none of its ritual nor any of its regulations, except that of circumcision. They live in the caves which abound in the island, sharing their habitations with their flocks. Their life being purely pastoral is of course a wandering one, but the men, in addition to their shepherd duties, collect aloes and other vegetable products, which they exchange with the Arabs for dates and grain, the women performing the greater part of all labour.

The chief product of the island is the aloe (*A. Sokotrina*), the juice of which, when pure, is said to be the finest in the world, and in which a considerable trade is carried on with Bombay. The plant grows wild all over the island, and under a judicious administration this source of revenue might be immensely developed. "Dragon's-blood," the name given in commerce to the gum which exudes from the *Pterocarpus Draco*, and the odoriferous gum yielded by the *Amara*, are the only other items of natural wealth deserving special mention. The moss "*Shennach*," collected by the women for staining their faces a paler yellow, is of only local importance. Chief, however, among the vegetable products is the date palm, which supplies the inhabitants with a staple article of food, and is in many other ways their most valuable possession, while the fruits of the *Lotus nebea* (about the size of the cherry), the tamarind, and other

plants, also help the natives to support existence. For themselves the people do little, and agriculture is almost entirely neglected. Millet is the only grain cultivated, and except for occasional plots of beans and cucumbers, with patches of cotton, indigo, and tobacco, the ground is nowhere laid under tribute. That this has not always been the condition of the island, the wild orange-trees, wild grapes, figs, pears, and yams, and various species of the pumpkin kind, amply prove; and the time, perhaps, may come when the tracts of land that bear these witnesses to former cultivation will be again brought under the plough, and the food-producing resources of the island be more actively taxed. Indeed, with perennial streams, fertile valleys, and the almost universal facility for storing water,—not to speak of the singular preference of that valuable plant, the aloe, for rocky and sterile sites,—there seems no reason why the greater part of the island should not be easily and immediately rendered productive.

The domesticated animals are camels, oxen, sheep, goats, and poultry. Horses once in use no longer exist, and donkeys, which until the introduction of the camel were the regular beasts of burthen, are now allowed to wander wild in troops. The camels are remarkable for size and strength, and so numerous as to be cheap; the cattle are small and without humps, the flesh being of excellent quality. The supply of fresh meat thus obtainable for ships *en route* between Europe and the East might with encouragement be most valuably developed. Goats of several kinds are abundant, one or more being considered wild, and as such, common property. The sheep are of the large tailed kind common to Arabia and Egypt. The dog is unknown, and one which was on board the brig *Palinurus* was mistaken by the natives for a pig. Wild animals proper are represented by the civet cat, rats and mice. Among the birds, wood-pigeons are very abundant, other common species being wild ducks, lapwings, crows, swallows, owls, vultures, of four kinds, and flamingoes. Poisonous snakes are very rare, but scorpions and centipedes abound, as also (according to Lieutenant Wellsted) a

venomous spider, which lives under loose stones and can inflict a painful and even dangerous bite. Fish swarm on every coast; while in the south turtles are found in large numbers during the season. A pearl fishery off Tamarida, carried on by divers from Oman, yields one of the chief items of such trade as the island possesses.

The island of Sokotra, interesting to-day as being the latest addition to the vast area over which Great Britain exercises a protectorate, is interesting also as a spot with a strange history and a spot where Christianity, pitted against infidel creeds, has been fairly ousted by them. The Christian religion flourished there two centuries ago, but to-day not a trace of it remains. Of the hundreds of cross-surmounted altars that once sanctified the land there is not one in existence, nor even a ruin to mark the site of one. A sketch of this decline of a once dominant faith will not be without interest.

The old Arabian geographers allege that Alexander the Great colonised the island by drafts of Greeks from Attica, and that, later, a company of Byzantine Christians being shipwrecked on the island converted the colonists to their faith, and themselves obtained supremacy among them. This was about the ninth century, and in the tenth, so immensely had Sokotra prospered, the island could, it is said, furnish a fighting force of 10,000 men. Three centuries later Marco Polo published the narrative of his travels, and, although he had not himself landed there, he had obtained sufficient information about the island during his voyage to describe its condition. Christianity was still predominant, and Sokotra had attained the dignity of an archbishopric; the people with their primate enjoying the reputation of being the best enchanters and wizards in the world, and possessing, among other special qualifications, the power of raising storms to defeat the hostile intentions of their enemies. Two centuries later, an Italian traveller* found the majority of the inhabitants Nestorian Christians, as also did a successor† in 1506. In that year the Portuguese took possession of the

* Nicolo Conti. † Ludovico de Barthema.

island, and the natives, still Christians, came out in a body to thank the victors for delivering them from the grievous thrall of the Moors. In compliment to their creed, they were received under the protection of the Court of Portugal, and out of deference to its commanding position the island was fortified. Meanwhile, however, the people had deviated from the original faith, and having embraced the Monophysite doctrines of Jacob Baradœus, were called Jacobites, and as such, were classed by contemporary writers with the Abyssinians; the men, we are told, were named after the Apostles, and the women all called 'Maries.' The cross, as an object of worship, was set up in all their churches, and as a sign of the faith was worn on their clothes; service was held three times a day, and prayers were read in the Chaldean (Syriac) language.

Though the Portuguese soon after evacuated the island, the inhabitants continued Christians, but the first step towards the decay of their religious constitution had been taken by the abolition of all ecclesiastical dignities (1541). Soon after this Francis Xavier landed in the island. He found the people still worshipping in Christian churches, with the cross as the emblem of their faith conspicuous on their altars and persons; but the preachers had now assumed a Mohammedan title, and the prayers were read in a forgotten tongue. The decline of the Christian faith appears during the next century to have been very rapid and complete. A church with a cross was in existence in 1607, but at that time the Jacobites had been reduced to a state of bondage by the members of the heathen creeds about them, while half a century later, though the cross and other insignia of their original belief even yet existed, the religion had become so mixed up with the emblems and rites of alien cults, that when, in 1656, Vincenzo, a Carmelite monk sent to the East by Pope Alexander VII., arrived there, he found the so-called Christians practising circumcision, holding wine and pork in abhorrence, and sacrificing to the moon. With this visit may be said to close the history of Christianity in Sokotra, for the next European who landed

in the island (1760) makes no mention of Christians or Christianity, while the *Palinurus* Surveying Expedition, which traversed the island in every direction in 1834, failed to discover any trace whatever of the Christian religion.

As a field for missionary enterprise, the island possesses, therefore, the unusually fascinating circumstances of a land and population that has relapsed from the nobler to a more degrading faith. Two centuries of suppression constitute, of course, a serious barrier in the way of those who would wish to reclaim the apostate islanders; but should the attempt be made, it may perhaps be found that once again in the history of Christian conversion the latent germs of the original faith may spring forth anew and a rich harvest of proselytes reward the labourers in the field.

Politically, the island of Sokotra is interesting only from the date at which it first attracted the attention of the English. Early in the seventeenth century the East India Company began to trade with it, the merchants receiving always—so the records testify—most hospitable entertainment. In 1800, when Bonaparte, then at the head of the French troops in Egypt, was contemplating a junction of his forces with those of Haidar Ali, Admiral Blanket was authorized by the Company to take possession of the island, and thus prevent the French from establishing a military outpost in the route of the India-bound merchantmen. The records, however, do not show that he did so, and the danger of French activity in this direction being soon after averted by their defeat in Egypt, attention was withdrawn from the island. In 1834, however, it seemed desirable to possess a coaling station *en route* between Suez and India, and while one party carefully surveyed the Arabian coast for a suitable situation, another made a thorough exploration of Sokotra. The result was the commencement of negotiations for the sale of the island, but the Sheikh of Keshin refused to part with his domains. "As sure as there is but one God, and he is in heaven, I will not sell so much," said he, making a span with his fingers; "this island was a gift of the Almighty

to the Mahras, and has descended from our forefathers to their children, over whom I am Sultan." The urgency of the situation, however, overruled all questions of equity, and accordingly a detachment of the Bombay Native Infantry took possession of the island in the name of the Company. But in 1839 Aden was captured, and being considered more suitable than Sokotra, the latter was abandoned. In 1876 fears were again entertained that the island might pass into the possession of some power not friendly to British supremacy in the East, and the Political Resident at Aden was sent to Sokotra to conclude such arrangements as should prevent this from happening. A treaty was accordingly signed by which, in return for the annual payment of a thousand dollars, the Sultan of Keshin promised not to allow any foreign residents to settle on the island, nor to cede any portion of it to any foreign power, without the consent of Great Britain. The Sultan of Keshin thus became a feudatory of England.

Historically, the island possesses much of interest, whether considered from its ethnological or religious aspect. In the account of the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea it is spoken of as the Insula Dioscoridis, a desolate spot inhabited by a mongrel population of Arabs, Indians, and Greeks. The name may be derived either from the Sanskrit words signifying "the Abode of Bliss," or from the Arabic, meaning, "Dragon's-blood," one of the chief products of the island; while the people themselves are spoken of as being subject to the kings of the Incense Country. In the sketch given above of the decline of Christianity in the island, the chief events of its history are touched upon up to the commencement of the sixteenth century. It was then that Fernandez Pereira, following the newly-discovered route round the Cape of Good Hope and up the African and Arabian coasts to India, chanced upon the discovery of the island; and three years later a fleet, under Tristan d'Acunha and Albuquerque, appeared off Sokotra to take possession. The attack was directed against the (then) capital—Zoko, and though the Arabs fought gallantly they were defeated, the town stormed

and the island captured. It was at that time subject to the Sheikh of the Mahra, who resided at Keshin on the coast of Arabia opposite, and when, after four years' occupation, the Portuguese evacuated it, Sokotra returned into his hands, and was held by him until 1876, the only interruptions to his authority being the temporary occupation of the island by the Turks, in 1538, by the Wahabis who destroyed Zuk (the old Zoko) in 1800, and by the English, who took possession of it for a time in 1835.

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The submarine plateau which forms the basis of Sokotra throws up between it and the mainland several other points, some of them of sufficient extent to have invited population. Thus Abdal Kuri, a strip of land twenty-six miles in length, affords, in the pasturage found scattered among the clefts of the mountains of which it is composed, subsistence to a few families of herdsmen and fishermen, while Leven Bay offers to vessels a secure anchorage during the north-east monsoon from October to April. Pearl oysters are met with on the Bacchus Bank, and its bays abound with fish. The Kalfarun Islands, the resort of innumerable sea-fowl, are covered with guano, which from time to time is collected by Arab vessels trading with the Red Sea littoral.

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